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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

US to Modernize Turkish F-16 Jetfighters - Hurriyet  
Armenia Wants Political Dialogue With Turkey - Milliyet  
Syria Completes Pullout From Lebanon - Sabah  
Dervis Appointed as Head of UNDP - Sabah  
Dervis Becomes No. 3 Man at UN - Hurriyet  
Talabani Voices Support for Blair Before Polls in Britain -  
Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Turkey Agrees With US on F-16 Modernization - Cumhuriyet  
FM Gul Lashes Out at EU Over Cyprus - Zaman  
Syria Ends 29-Year Military Presence in Lebanon - Cumhuriyet  
Damascus' Lebanon Venture Ends After 29 Years - Zaman  
Syrian Era Ends in Lebanon - Yeni Safak  
Iraq Survey Team: No WMD in Syria - Yeni Safak  
UNDP Chief Dervis to Work for Poor Nations - Radikal  
Damascus University to Open Turkish Desk - Radikal  
Weizman Laid to Rest - Cumhuriyet  
Morrison, Father of A-Bomb, Dies at 89 - Cumhuriyet

BRIEFING

US-Turkey Sign Military Modernization Deal: Defense  
Minister Vecdi Gonul said on Tuesday that Turkey had signed  
a deal worth \$1.1 billion with the United States for  
modernizing 117 Turkish F-16 fighter jets. The main  
contractor will be the Lockheed Martin Corporation. Gonul  
and US Ambassador Eric Edelman held a joint press conference  
yesterday to announce the agreement. Gonul said the  
modernization work would begin in July and will be completed  
by 2012. He added that Turkish firms would also participate  
in the project. 'We are strategic allies cooperating on  
many regional issues such as the Balkans, the Caucasus and  
the Middle East,' Gonul said. Ambassador Edelman hailed the  
accord as a great example of defense industrial cooperation  
between the two allies. Edelman noted that the project will  
benefit both countries, improve military ties, and increase  
the capacity of Turkey's F-16 fleet.

Gul Attends EU-Turkey Association Council Meetings: The  
European Union told Turkey on Tuesday to speed up reforms  
before entry talks start in October, papers report. Foreign  
Minister Abdullah Gul, in Luxembourg to attend the Turkey-EU  
Association Council meetings, held a joint press conference  
with EU term president Luxembourg Minister Jean Asselborn.  
Asselborn stressed the need for Turkey to implement EU-  
driven reforms, normalize ties with the Greek Cypriot  
administration, and protect religious freedom for non-Muslim  
minorities in Turkey. Asselborn, during an earlier meeting  
with Gul, voiced concern about the human rights situation in  
Turkey, citing the beating of protesters when police cracked  
down on a women's rights rally in Istanbul in March. Gul  
told the press that Turkey is making progress on the  
sweeping reforms demanded by EU. He had earlier told EU  
officials that Turkey expects equal treatment with other  
candidate countries from the EU. Gul also criticized the EU  
for not taking steps to end the international isolation of  
Turkish Cypriots. Meanwhile Prime Minister Erdogan,  
speaking at a public event in Istanbul, criticized the EU  
for 'sheltering terrorists' from the PKK and failing to cut  
off financial support from the PKK coming from European  
countries. Erdogan also warned the EU against 'creating  
conflict' through its approach to the Armenia 'genocide'  
issue. The PM denied that Turkey's EU reform process had  
stagnated, charging that 'any stagnation in the process has  
been caused by the other side.'

Yerevan Calls for the Establishment of Relations with

Turkey: Armenian President Robert Kocharyan has responded to a letter from Prime Minister Erdogan calling for a joint committee to study the issue of 'genocide' claims by Armenians. The letter said that Armenia is ready to establish relations with Ankara without any preconditions. 'We can later discuss various issues in an intergovernmental committee,' Kocharyan suggested. However, the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said that Kocharyan's letter is full of tricky terminology and that Ankara is cautious over establishing relations without having settled the issue of 'genocide' claims.

Bagis Attends New York Panel on Turkey-US Ties: AK Party lawmaker Egemen Bagis told a panel meeting in New York that any step that is taken by US forces in Iraq against PKK militants would dispel the negative atmosphere in US-Turkish relations and reduce anti-American sentiment in Turkey 'overnight.' 'It is our right to expect our closest ally, the United States, to hand over PKK terrorists to Turkey,' Bagis said. He added that Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to the United States in June will demonstrate the friendly relations between the two countries. Bagis also criticized "Wall Street Journal" columnist Robert Pollock for raising only the negative aspects of Turkey-US ties in his paper after a visitng the country for just 36 hours. Bagis slammed Pollock for not writing anything the Turks had said in favor of the United States.

Dervis Appointed Head of UNDP: Turkey's former economic minister Kemal Dervis has been appointed as head of the UN Development Program. Papers say that Dervis, who was chosen over five other candidates, will be the first UNDP chief who does not come from a donor country but rather from a country where the UNDP has an active program. Dervis is expected to resign his seat in parliament to take up his UN position in coming days.

US Releases Another Turk from Guantanamo: The repatriated two Belgian nationals, one of whom is also a Turkish citizen, to Brussels from Guantanamo Bay, where they had been held for three years. The dual national, Mesut Sen, was arrested in Pakistan in December 2001 based on suspected links to Al-Qaeda.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION: EU Enlargement; Pope Benedict XVI

"I Hope It Happens to Turkey As Well"

Sami Kohen observed in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (4/27): "Both Bulgaria and Romania had a speedy transition from communism to democracy, so they did not find it very difficult to meet EU standards. Their challenge was more on the economic side, and the EU commission had to provide certain privileges on agricultural issues. Although Bulgaria and Romania are now at the point of integration into the EU, there are certain conditions being imposed on them before they can become full members. The agreement between the two countries and the EU has a special provision which provides for the postponement of full membership to at least 2008 unless the reforms, particularly on the judicial side, are fully implemented. It seems that Bulgaria is not so concerned about such a condition. The Bulgarian Foreign Minister has already expressed his satisfaction with the decision, saying that 'such a condition will help us to implement the reforms with a certain discipline.' This approach should present a lesson for others. These two neighbors of Turkey, although they are less developed economically, have reached a significant point in their EU accession process. Let's hope that Turkey reaches the same point eventually. Yet in the meantime, we better look for the secret of their success."

"Pope Benedict XVI and Turkey"

Zafer Atay opined in the economic-political "Dunya" (4/27): "The new Pope is 78 years old. He has an interesting past. He was a member of the Nazi Youth Organization. He joined the army toward the end of the Second World War. He worked at an antiaircraft battery. After all this, it is difficult to understand his claims that he never fought in the war. Benedict XVI disapproves of many things. He opposes feminism, for example. He says that popular music is the 'expression of primitive passions.' He doesn't want female priests. He rejects abortion and euthanasia. He harshly criticizes priests who favor homosexual marriage in the church. There are already many nicknames for him, such as 'the bogeyman', 'the Panzer Cardinal', 'The Rothweiler of the Vatican', and 'the Black Pope.' The new Pope is also against Turkey's EU accession. Moreover, circles close to the Vatican believe that Ratzinger's anti-Turkish remarks will have a negative impact on some member countries. The same circles urge Turkey to convince the Pope on the accession issue in order to avoid problems in the future. We will have to see how Ratzinger, now that he has become Pope, will act on issues he has commented on in the past."

EDELMAN